

370 ^MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER

or trades of his characters, and such other technical matters as might be useful to him, and his notes on those subjects were also gathered together in portfolios. They were often based on personal observation, but naturally enough Zola consulted technical works and friends whom he knew to be well informed on certain points. Their letters and quotations from the books he had consulted were added to his personal memoranda.

By the time all this was done his materials were often in excess of what he required. Nevertheless he based himself upon them in planning his book. He decided on the number of chapters the volume should contain, and distributed the materials among them. This entailed much minute labour. For instance, he took his first rough draft of his subject, and distributed the principal incidents mentioned in it among the proposed chapters ; then he took his notes on his characters and apportioned them in a similar manner ; in one chapter, for instance, the appearance of some individual must be described; in another some particular characteristic must be brought to the front; in yet another the changes effected in the same personage by environment or other causes must be dealt with. Thus borrowing notes from one and another of his first portfolios, and distributing them as the narrative and its situations might suggest, Zola

gradually planned his chapters from the first to the last.

All this was still rough work, and before committing a chapter to paper, Zola re-examined his materials, set them in what seemed the best order, both with respect to what he might have said in previous chapters and with respect to the effect he desired to produce in the new one. Now and again he would find some note superfluous, and reject it